

Message Text

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72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 DRC-01 /150 W

----- 058972

R 251525Z SEP 73

FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1361

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY CURACAO

COMCARIBSEAFRON

UNCLAS MARTINIQUE 0372

E.O11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT,FW

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF CANTONAL ELECTIONS.

1. FIRST ROUND OF CANTONAL ELECTIONS HELD SEPTEMBER 23.

AS IN METROPOLITAN FRANCE, HALF OF SEATS IN GENERAL COUNCIL IN EACH OVERSEAS DEPARTMENT (DOM) WERE AT STAKE. GENERAL COUNCIL IS CLOSEST THING TO LOCAL PARLIAMENT ALTHOUGH ITS POWERS ARE VERY LIMITED.

2. MARTINIQUE. 18 SEATS WERE AT ISSUE OF WHICH GAULLISTS HELD

11. THEY LOST 4 OF THESE ALL TO OPPONENTS OF DEPARTMENTAL ATATUS: I.E. TO 2 ORTHODOX SOCIALISTS, 1 COMMUNIST ALLY AND 1 PPM ALLY. WHILE SECOND ROUND BALLOTING REQUIRED IN 4 OF THESE 18 CONSTITUENCIES, THIS NOT EXPECTED TO CHANGE SITUATION SIGNIFICANTLY. ONE RESULT WILL BE TO MAKE GAULLISTS EVEN MORE DEPENDENT ON INDEPENDENTS TO MAINTAIN THEIR CONTROL OF GENERAL COUNCIL.

3. GUADELOUPE . SITUATION LESS CLEAR IN GUADELOUPE WHERE 18 SEATS WERE LIKEWISE AT STAKE. INCUMBENTS WON NINE, A PRO-DEPARTMENTAL SOCIALIST REPLACED A COMMUNIST IN A TENTH, WHILE ONE INDEPENDENT REPLACED ANOTHER INDEPENDENT IN AN ELEVENTH. SECOND ROUND ELECTIONS FOR REMAINING 7 SEATS WILL BE HELD SEPT. 30.

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INCUMBENTS AHEAD IN ONLY TWO OF THESE. CONTROL OF GENERAL

COUNCIL PRESENTLY EXERCISED BY PRO-DEPARTMENTAL SOCIALISTS
AND GAULLISTS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN JEOPARDY. HOWEVER,
RESULTS SHOULD BRING MANY CHANGES IN MAKE-UP OF COUNCIL.
4. RESULTS FROM GUYANE(FRENCH GUIANA) NOT YET RECEIVED.
5.COMMENTS: CAUTION SHOULD BE EXERCISED IN INTERPRETING
GENERAL COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS AS REFLECTING CHANGES
EITHER IN PARTY STRENGTH OR VIEWS ON MAJOR ISSUES SUCH AS
FUTURE STATUS OF DOMS. PERSONALITIES RATHER THAN ISSUES,
DOMINATE THESE ELECTIONS. MOREOVER, LACK OF POWER IN HANDS
OF GENERAL COUNCIL RESULTS IN WEAK VOTER PARTICIPATION:
MARTINIQUE ONLY 47% OF REGISTERED VOTERS WENT TO POOLS
COMPARED WITH 60 % OF MARCH 1973 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS,
IN GUADELOUPE ONLY 42% COMPARED WITH 59% IN SECOND ROUND OF
THOSE ELECTIONS.
REMOLE

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